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CL 553 United Methodist Polity and Discipline

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CL553 UNITED METHODIST POLITY AND DISCIPLINE
Spring 2004 – 2 Hours Credit

Instructor: Dr. Al Gwinn

Meets Wednesdays, 2:30-4:15 pm, in McKenna Chapel

My office is not located at Asbury, however, I will be happy to arrange to meet on campus for any necessary consultation. Please call Claire Williams at 858-2224 for an appointment.

Welcome! This class is one of four classes offered at Asbury that are designed to meet denominational requirements for United Methodist students seeking ordination as a deacon or elder in the United Methodist Church. The other classes are The Theology of John Wesley, United Methodist History, and United Methodist Doctrine.

About Me: My name is Al Gwinn and it is my privilege to serve as instructor and guide as we learn, discuss, and apply the subject material of our class this semester. I currently serve as pastor of Lexington First United Methodist Church and chair the Kentucky Conference Board of Ordained Ministry. Some of my ministry experiences include serving on the Bishop's Cabinet as the Lexington District Superintendent, delegate to five General Conferences, and presently a member of the General Council on Ministries and the SEJ Administrative Council.

It is my sincere desire to share with you my passions for personal involvement in service to you who are preparing for leadership and ministry in our church and for committed leadership and involvement throughout our great connectional church. Please know that it is my sincere intent to assist you in any way reasonably possible to master the requirements of our course in Polity and Discipline!

Purpose of the Course: This course seeks to acquaint you with how the United Methodist Church orders and structures itself in its total life, doctrine, ministry and mission. The course purposes to fulfill the denominational requirement for polity for you who are seeking ordination in the United Methodist Church.

Objectives:

- To enable you to have a working understanding of church order and practice and the practical discipline of the United Methodist Church and The Book of Discipline. This course seeks to ready you to use the Discipline as an ordained minister in a local United Methodist church.
- To be able to recognize and appreciate the biblical, theological, and historical foundations for United Methodist structure.
- In a spirit of affirmation, you will offer candid critique and visioning for the future of our United Methodist polity.
- To enable you to become more conversant through classroom discussion with the live issues relating to United Methodist polity.

Course Requirements:

1. Punctual class attendance is expected. Active class participation (i.e., reading pre-assigned texts, attentive listening, note-taking, asking relevant questions, and entering into discussions) is vital *and will compose 10% -- 10 points of your final grade*. Students are allowed two unexcused absences without a grade penalty. Three points (out of 100 possible) will be deducted from your final grade for each subsequent, unexcused absence. The **only** absences excused will be severe illness corroborated by a physician's statement, death of a family member, and genuine life threatening emergencies.
2. You will be expected to fulfill all class requirements on time. Under dire circumstances, arrangements may be made **beforehand** to adjust a due date. Weekly assignments will not be accepted after the dates due.
3. Read the entire Book of Discipline (2000). Read Polity, Practice and the Mission by Thomas Frank. Submit, by each reading due date, **two** typewritten observations / reflections taken from your assigned weekly reading (one from each text). An observation is a reference to a particular sentence or paragraph in the readings (please cite) and your reflection should be approximately 2 paragraphs (each) in length. (*Value of the final grade: 12% -- 12 points.*)
4. During the semester, attend one Church Council or Administrative Board meeting of a United Methodist church and observe what organizational structure is assumed by the church. In light of ¶ 242, 243.1, 243.2 and 246.2 briefly describe in one or two paragraphs the church's organizational plan. Is it the "basic organizational plan" described in ¶243? Does it use the former Administrative Board and Council of Ministries structure or does it use the Administrative Council structure? Does it use some alternative structure per ¶246.2 and ¶242? What leadership style did you observe from the leaders? What are the strengths and weaknesses of that leadership style? (*Value of final grade: 13% -- 13 points*)
5. Submit a reading report by the last day of class that details your reading of "related texts." You are expected to read at least three of these texts as listed in the course bibliography. (*Value of final grade: 15% -- 15 points.*)
6. Comprehensive Final Exam (*Value of the final grade: 50% -- 50 points.*)
Your final exam will test your knowledge of assigned course readings, course lecture content, and any materials made available in classes. There is no real substitute for consistent class attendance, good notes, and full completion of all assigned reading in preparation for this exam.

Summary of Grading Procedure:

A = 93-100

B = 80-92

C = 70-79

D = below 70

A	4.00	Exceptional work: outstanding/surpassing achievement of course objectives
A-	3.70	
B+	3.30	
B	3.00	Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives
B-	2.70	
C+	2.30	
C	2.00	Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives
C-	1.70	
D+	1.30	
D	1.00	Marginal Work: minimal or inadequate achievement of course objectives
D-	.70	
F	0.00	Unacceptable work: failure of course objectives

CL553 CALENDAR
Spring 2004

DATE	Reading from <u>Discipline</u>*	TOPIC of Class and Reading from Frank* (Topic for Class is Subject to Change)
Feb. 11		Syllabus and Introduction to Polity
Feb. 18	Pp. v-20	Historical Considerations in the Formation of UM Polity Chs. 1, 2
Feb. 25	Pp. 21-74	Constitution and Doctrinal Standards Ch. 3
Mar. 3	Pp. 74-86,	Our Theological Task Ch. 4
Mar. 10	Pp. 87-122	The Ministry of All Christians and Social Principles Ch. 5
Mar. 17	Pp. 123-181	The Local Church Ch. 6
Mar. 24	Pp. 182-265	<i>The Ministry of the Ordained</i> Ch. 7
Mar. 29 – Apr. 2		Reading Week
Apr. 7	Pp. 267-294	The Superintendency Ch. 8
Apr. 14	Pp. 295-331	The Conferences – General, Jurisdictional, Central & Missionary Ch. 9
Apr. 21	Pp. 331-425	The Annual and District Conferences Ch. 10
Apr. 28	Pp. 426- 685	General Agencies and Church Property Ch. 11
May 5	Pp. 687-721	Judicial Administration Ch. 12 <i>Organizational Plan of Local Church Due</i>
May 12		Final Exam Review
May 17 - 21		FINAL EXAM WEEK (Exam date: Wednesday, May 19)

***Please note: The readings listed for each date should be completed before coming to class.**

BIBLIOGRAPHY

REQUIRED TEXTS

The Book of Discipline 2000. Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 2000.
 Thomas Edward Frank, Polity, Practice, and the Mission of the United Methodist Church
 Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997.

RELATED TEXTS

Campbell, Dennis, The Yoke of Obedience: The Meaning of Ordination. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988.

Campbell, Dennis M., William B. Lawrence, and Russell E. Richey, editors. Doctrine and Disciplines. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999.

Decisions of the Judicial Council, UMC (1968-1996). Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1996.

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Hickman, Hoyt, ed., The Worship Resources of the United Methodist Hymnal. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989.

Lawrence, William B., Dennis M. Campbell, Russell E. Richey, editors. The People(s) Called Methodist: Forms and Reforms of Their Life. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998.

Long, Edward LeRoy, Patterns of Polity: Varieties of Church Governance. Cleveland, Ohio. Pilgrim Press, 2001.

O'Malley, J. Steven, Pilgrimage of Faith: The Legacy of the Otterbeins. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1973.

Richey, Russell E., The Methodist Conference in America. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996.

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Richey, Russell E., William B. Lawrence, and Dennis M. Campbell, editors. Questions For the Twenty-First Century Church. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999.

Rowe, Kenneth E., "The Ministry of Deacons in Methodism from Wesley to Today," Quarterly Review, 19, no. 4 (Winter 1999), pp. 343-356.

Staples, Rob C., Outward Sign and Inward Grace. Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1991.

Tigert, John J., A Constitutional History of American Episcopal Methodism. Nashville: Publishing House of the M.E. Church South, 1894.

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Wesley, John, The Works of John Wesley, ed. By Thomas Jackson, 3rd ed., 14 vols., vol. 8: Addresses, Essays, Letters. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979.

Willimon, William H., Calling and Character: Virtues of the Ordained Life. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000.